



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
1222 Woodward Street
Orlando, Florida 32803
407 / 648-6013
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



FARM LABOR

May 20, 2003

FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 70,000 for the week of April 6 through 12. Farmers hired 53,000 workers compared with 70,000 in January 2003 and 52,000 in April 2002. Agricultural services provided 17,000 paid workers, equal to last quarter, but up 6,000 from the number supplied a year ago. Fieldwork slowed due to wet soils in some Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas during the survey week. Drier weather over the central and southern Peninsula allowed sugarcane and vegetable harvesting to proceed at a normal pace. Producers irrigated citrus groves located on the high sand hills to maintain good tree condition. Picking of Valencia oranges was very active.

The wage rate for all hired workers in April averaged \$8.98 per hour, eight cents or almost one percent higher than the January 2003 wage of \$8.90, and up four percent from the \$8.63 paid last year. Farmers paid an average of \$8.86 per hour, five cents above the \$8.81 paid in January, and twenty-nine cents higher than the \$8.57 paid last year. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$9.40 per hour, five cents above the \$9.35 paid in January, and forty cents above the \$9.00 paid last year.

UNITED STATES

There were 938,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches the week of April 6-12, 2003, down 13 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 781,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 157,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.16 per hour during the April 2003 reference week, up 33 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.40 per hour, up 34 cents from last April, while livestock workers earned \$8.75 per hour compared with \$8.43 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.49 per hour, was up 34 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 40.1 hours for hired workers during the survey week compared with 40.2 hours a year ago.

The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in California, the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina), Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota) and Mountain I (Idaho, Montana and Wyoming) regions. In California, the Pacific, Southeast and Northeast II regions, below normal temperatures and above normal precipitation curtailed field activities, reducing the demand for hired workers. In the Southern Plains region, grazing land was abundantly available in most areas, decreasing the need to move cattle, and lessening the demand for livestock workers. Heavy snow in Nebraska and South Dakota

brought fieldwork to a standstill until late in the week, which lessened the need for hired workers in the Northern Plains region. Rains in Idaho delayed planting and field preparation activities, lowering the demand for hired workers in the Mountain I region.

The largest increases in number of hired farm workers over last year occurred in the Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana and Ohio) and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia) regions. In the Corn Belt I region, although scattered rains fell, much of the region was spared from the heavier rain and snow which plagued the surrounding areas. Therefore, fertilizer applications and field preparation activities were able to progress more rapidly than in the 2002 reference week, which increased the need for hired workers. In the Appalachian II region, a return to more normal weather patterns compared to the extremely wet spring of 2002 caused a higher demand for field workers. Nurseries and greenhouses were gearing up for the spring season, and cattle, dairy and equine operations had a constant need for hired workers.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), Northeast I (New England and New York), Northeast II and Southeast regions. The higher wages in the Corn Belt II region were mainly due to fewer seasonal workers on the payroll. Wages in the Northeast I and Northeast II regions were higher as a result of a larger percentage of nursery and greenhouse employees in the work force. Farm operations in the Northeast II region also had considerably fewer seasonal workers on the payroll. Wages in the Southeast region were higher as more salaried employees worked fewer hours, and the number of seasonal workers was down.

Table 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, April 6 - 12, 2003, with comparisons

| Employer, Year, and survey week | Hired Workers | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|-----------|------|
| | Number of workers | | | Hours Worked Per Week | Wages Paid by Type of Work | | | |
| | All | Expected to work | | | All | Field | Livestock | |
| | | 150 days or more | 149 days or less | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| HIRED BY FARMERS | | | | | | | | |
| | | Thousands | | Hours | Dollars Per Hour ^{1/} | | | |
| 2003 | | | | | | | | |
| | April 6 - 12 | 53.0 | 42.0 | 11.0 | 38.3 | 8.86 | 8.05 | 8.10 |
| | January 12 - 18 | 70.0 | 56.0 | 14.0 | 37.2 | 8.81 | 7.80 | 8.30 |
| 2002 | | | | | | | | |
| | October 6 - 12 | 57.0 | 51.0 | 6.0 | 38.9 | 8.67 | 7.50 | 8.60 |
| | July 7 - 13 | 43.0 | 38.0 | 5.0 | 37.5 | 8.48 | 7.25 | 7.80 |
| | April 7 - 13 | 52.0 | 46.0 | 6.0 | 40.6 | 8.57 | 7.75 | 7.50 |
| | January 6 - 12 | 62.0 | 50.0 | 12.0 | 37.2 | 8.97 | 8.15 | 8.55 |
| 2001 | | | | | | | | |
| | October 7 - 13 | 51.0 | 44.0 | 7.0 | 41.8 | 8.84 | 7.70 | 8.00 |
| | July 8 - 14 | 48.0 | 43.0 | 5.0 | 40.8 | 8.65 | 7.50 | 7.65 |
| | April 8 - 14 | 63.0 | 52.0 | 11.0 | 39.9 | 8.40 | 7.75 | 7.90 |
| HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | | | | | | | | |
| | April 6 - 12 | 17.0 | | | 33.0 | 9.40 | | |
| | January 12 - 18 | 17.0 | | | 32.0 | 9.35 | | |
| 2002 | | | | | | | | |
| | October 6 - 12 | 5.0 | | | 31.5 | 9.00 | | |
| | July 7 - 13 | 4.0 | | | 42.5 | 9.25 | | |
| | April 7 - 13 | 11.0 | | | 34.0 | 9.00 | | |
| | January 6 - 12 | 19.0 | | | 38.5 | 8.25 | | |
| 2001 | | | | | | | | |
| | October 7 - 13 | 5.0 | | | 34.0 | 8.70 | | |
| | July 8 - 14 | 2.0 | | | 43.5 | 9.54 | | |
| | April 8 - 14 | 14.0 | | | 39.0 | 8.30 | | |
| HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES | | | | | | | | |
| 2003 | | | | | | | | |
| | April 6 - 12 | 70.0 | | | | 8.98 | | |
| | January 12 - 18 | 87.0 | | | | 8.90 | | |
| 2002 | | | | | | | | |
| | October 6 - 12 | 62.0 | | | | 8.69 | | |
| | July 7 - 13 | 47.0 | | | | 8.55 | | |
| | April 7 - 13 | 63.0 | | | | 8.63 | | |
| | January 6 - 12 | 81.0 | | | | 8.80 | | |
| 2001 | | | | | | | | |
| | October 7 - 13 | 56.0 | | | | 8.83 | | |
| | July 8 - 14 | 50.0 | | | | 8.69 | | |
| | April 8 - 14 | 77.0 | | | | 8.38 | | |

^{1/} Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

**Table 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked,
selected States, April 6 - 12, 2003, with comparisons ^{1/}**

| Item | Florida | California | Texas & Oklahoma | Arizona & New Mexico | Hawaii | United States ^{2/} |
|--|---------|------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Thousands | | | | | | |
| All hired workers | | | | | | |
| April 6 - 12, 2003 | 53 | 220 | 49 | 16 | 7 | 781 |
| January 12 - 18, 2003 | 70 | *235 | 50 | 22 | 7 | *729 |
| April 7 - 13, 2002 | 52 | 245 | 60 | 20 | 7 | 890 |
| Expected to work | | | | | | |
| 150 days or more | | | | | | |
| April 6 - 12, 2003 | 42 | 185 | 38 | 15 | 6 | 619 |
| January 12 - 18, 2003 | 56 | *195 | 40 | 20 | 6 | *614 |
| April 7 - 13, 2002 | 46 | 209 | 50 | 18 | 6 | 722 |
| 149 days or less | | | | | | |
| April 6 - 12, 2003 | 11 | 35 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 162 |
| January 12 - 18, 2003 | 14 | 40 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 115 |
| April 7 - 13, 2002 | 6 | 36 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 168 |
| Dollars per hour ^{3/} | | | | | | |
| All hired worker wage rate | | | | | | |
| April 6 - 12, 2003 | 8.86 | 9.22 | 8.31 | 7.93 | 11.50 | 9.16 |
| January 12 - 18, 2003 | 8.81 | *9.44 | 8.85 | 8.12 | 11.04 | *9.34 |
| April 7 - 13, 2002 | 8.57 | 9.13 | 7.95 | 8.21 | 11.14 | 8.83 |
| Wages by type of worker | | | | | | |
| Field & Livestock | | | | | | |
| April 6 - 12, 2003 | 8.06 | 8.48 | 7.75 | 7.52 | 9.63 | 8.49 |
| January 12 - 18, 2003 | 7.87 | 8.46 | 8.29 | 7.48 | 9.36 | 8.50 |
| April 7 - 13, 2002 | 7.72 | 8.47 | 7.31 | 7.71 | 9.43 | 8.15 |
| Field | | | | | | |
| April 6 - 12, 2003 | 8.05 | 8.33 | 7.62 | 7.10 | 9.58 | 8.40 |
| January 12 - 18, 2003 | 7.80 | *8.22 | 8.13 | 6.92 | 9.31 | *8.30 |
| April 7 - 13, 2002 | 7.75 | 8.33 | 6.92 | 7.51 | 9.40 | 8.06 |
| Livestock | | | | | | |
| April 6 - 12, 2003 | 8.10 | 10.15 | 7.98 | 8.24 | ^{4/} | 8.75 |
| January 12 - 18, 2003 | 8.30 | 10.10 | 8.51 | 8.22 | ^{4/} | *8.90 |
| April 7 - 13, 2002 | 7.50 | 10.20 | 7.78 | 8.35 | ^{4/} | 8.43 |
| Average hours per week | | | | | | |
| Hours worked by all hired workers | | | | | | |
| April 6 - 12, 2003 | 38.3 | 43.1 | 40.7 | 47.3 | 35.6 | 40.1 |
| January 12 - 18, 2003 | 37.2 | *40.8 | 37.9 | 47.2 | 37.9 | *37.7 |
| April 7 - 13, 2002 | 40.6 | 43.7 | 39.6 | 46.2 | 35.8 | 40.2 |

^{1/} Excludes Agricultural Service workers.

^{2/} United States excludes Alaska.

^{3/} Value of any perquisites provided are not included in wage rates.

^{4/} Insufficient data for this category; included in all hired wages.

* Revised.

RELIABILITY OF FARM LABOR ESTIMATES

SURVEY PROCEDURES: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of April using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected.

Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from an area sampling frame. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the NASS list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was April 6-12, 2003.

RELIABILITY: Two types of errors, sampling and non-sampling, are always present in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "accuracy" of the estimates.

Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for number of hired workers at the U.S. level is normally less than 5 percent. The

relative sampling error for the number of hired workers generally ranged between 8 and 22 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 0.9 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.9 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 6 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm ranged between 2 and 18 percent at the regional level.

Non-sampling errors can occur in a complete census as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in editing, coding or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize non-sampling errors.

REVISION POLICY: Farm labor information is subject to revision the next time the information is published or the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for April 2002 and January 2003 were subject to revision with this report. Revisions were made and previous data are reprinted in this report for your information.

NEXT FARM LABOR PUBLICATION DATE: The August 15th report will have information for the survey week of July 6-12, 2003. The report will include the number of All Hired Workers, Average Hours Worked by Hired Workers and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates at the regional and U.S. levels. The wage rate for field, livestock, and combined field and livestock workers will also be available at the regional and U.S. level. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding wage rates will be published for California and Florida.